

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 SSM-03 /085 W
-----017415 090209Z /63

R 081348Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7575
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 0196

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PLO, ET
SUBJ: PLO TO OPEN OFFICE IN ETHIOPIA

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. ENGLISH DAILY, GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND CONTROLLED NEWSPAPER REPORTED MARCH 8 THAT PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO) WOULD OPEN AN OFFICE IN ADDIS ABABA. (DATE NOT SPECIFIED.) ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY (MOFA) STATEMENT SAID DECISION TO OPEN OFFICE FOLLOWED FIVE-DAY VISIT TO
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ETHIOPIA MARCH 1-5 BY HIGH LEVEL PLO DELEGATION AT INVITATION OF PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC). MOFA STATEMENT ADDED THAT PLO DELEGATION CONDEMNED IMPERIALIST-ORCHESTRATED AGGRESSION AGAINST ETHIOPIA. ON ITS PART, ETHIOPIA REAFFIRMED ITS SUPPORT FOR ASPIRATIONS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND AS CONCRETE EXPRESSION OF THAT SYMPATHY INVITED PLO TO OPEN AN OFFICE IN ADDIS TO "TAKE CARE OF PALESTINIAN

AFFAIRS." END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: OFFER TO ESTABLISH A PLO OFFICE IN ADDIS ABABA FOLLOWS SERIES OF POSSIBLY LINKED EVENTS INCLUDING TERMINATION OF ETHIOPIA'S ISRAELI CONNECTION, REPORTED LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR ETHIOPIA'S POSITION VIS-A-VIS SOMALIA DURING SIAD VISIT TO TRIPOLI MARCH 1-3, RECENT VISIT OF ALGERIAN SPECIAL ENVOY OF PRES. BOUMEDIENNE (MARCH 6) AND SOVIET PRESSURE ON SYRIA AND IRAQ TO CEASE MILITARY SUPPORT TO BOTH ERITREA AND SOMALIA. PMAC DECISION ON PLO PROBABLY A TACTICAL AND POSSIBLY IDEOLOGICAL/POLITICAL ONE (RADICALISM AND PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY), DESIGNED TO ALLEVIATE SOME OF ARAB PRESSURES ON REGIME, ESPECIALLY IN ERITREA. IT MAY ALSO BE CLEVER ATTEMPT TO SPLIT ATTITUDES OF ARAB LEAGUE TOWARD ETHIOPIA TO NEUTRALIZE ANY POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH SUDAN OR DJIBOUTI. HOWEVER, IT IS STILL DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE ETHIOPIA'S SYMPATHIES FOR PLO ARE WHOLLY SINCERE, GIVEN DEEP RESERVOIR OF TRADITIONAL ETHIOPIAN SUSPICION OF ARABS. IT IS ALSO CURIOUS THAT MARCH 1-5 PLO HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION'S VISIT WAS NOT PUBLICIZED OR PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED UNTIL AFTER ITS DEPARTURE. END CONFIDENTIAL.
MATHERON

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